

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages

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January 3, 2016

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<sup>A</sup> Genesis 2:24; Revelation 21:1-2

<sup>B</sup> Luke 1:51

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<sup>C</sup> Deuteronomy 14:26; Ephesians 5:18

<sup>D</sup> John 20:30-31

A. Introduction – Scripture Reading

John 2:1-12

1. Questions

- a. now, after we read such a story, a number of questions will quite naturally come to our minds
  - (A) what was this wedding like?
  - (B) why did Jesus speak in that way to His mother?
  - (C) what kind of wine was it ... Manischewitz?
  - (D) what did the bride wear?
- b. however, even as it was with Jesus' disciples and their questions which often missed the point, so perhaps are many of those in our minds
- c. nevertheless, as we ramble again through these verses, I shall attempt to answer some of them
- d. but hopefully, we shall also pick up the lessons for which this event was included in this gospel of John

2. Jewish Marriages

- a. were different from ours, and could vary a lot from the following
- b. but usually, it was at the betrothal – or engagement – when the vows of commitment were made, which could predate the actual marriage festivities by many months or years
- c. when the wedding actually came to take place the celebrations might cover from 1 up to 6 days, depending upon the bridegroom's means
  - (A) it was he who was responsible for financing these celebrations
  - (B) since Thursday was the traditional day for the culmination of the wedding feast, just as June is our traditional month for weddings, then the guests could begin celebrating as early as Sunday
  - (C) people would come and go, and it was a time of great rejoicing
  - (D) then on Thursday, say, the bride would be brought to join with the bridegroom – the important one – in the festivities
  - (E) and, in the evening, which was now the sixth day, the ceremony would be carried out and the wedding take place
- d. a wedding was a declaration to the extended family and even the whole town that a couple were now united as husband and wife

1. "1 And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding."
  - a. this was the third day from the last event in the previous chapter, Jesus meeting and calling Nathanael
  - b. which means, according to the Jewish way of counting, that there had been one day between that event and this day
  - c. we are not told how long this wedding had been going on, nor if this was the day of the ceremony
    - (A) Mary was one of those invited, and since she had to come from Nazareth, may have been one of the extended family of either the bride or groom
    - (B) Jesus had been invited too, and with Him, His disciples
  - d. Who was the groom? Who was the bride? ... we are not told

## 2. Marriage Is Important in the Scriptures

- a. the history of mankind dawns with a marriage
  - (A) when Adam finds no other helpmate befitting him
  - (B) until he meets that one special woman made just for him
  - (C) becoming the pattern henceforward, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)
- b. and the history of redeemed mankind culminates with marriage
  - (A) when we read of the New Jerusalem, the abode of all of those who have been redeemed in Christ
  - (B) "1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:1-2)
- c. so that in Christian marriage ceremonies there is often a reference
  - (A) that marriage signifies to us the mystical union between Christ and His church
  - (B) that Christ sanctified marriage by His presence at this marriage in Cana of Galilee

## C. The Problem . . . . . 2:3-5

1. "3 And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." (John 2:3-5)
  - a. a wedding in a small town was a community celebration
  - b. the people of the town, small as it was, as they dropped in to join the celebrants could easily exhaust the wine

before the wedding finished

- c. Mary's concern regarding this fact, shows that she was more than just a casual attendee, but having some, if even minor, responsibility in the organisation of the event
- d. so she carries her and their need to the One she trusts, her own son

## 2. Jesus' Words to Mary

- a. strike a discordant note to our 20th century, Canadian ears
  - (A) remember, though, that from the cross Jesus addressed His mother in the same fashion: "Woman, behold your son."
  - (B) this form of address does not show disrespect
  - (C) someone has said that it comes very near to the form of address used in Ulster, Northern Ireland: "Woman dear!"
- b. then the following words seem hard to understand,
  - (A) literally they are, "what to me and to you?", which conveys the meaning, "even if this affects you, how does it involve me?"
  - (B) this marks the end of that period Jesus' life of which Luke 1:51 says, "[and He went down with them](#) (His parents) , [and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them;](#)"
  - (C) though His hour has not yet come – that hour when the real work of the incarnation was accomplished at the cross – from now until then his actions are subject solely to His Heavenly Father
  - (D) in effect Jesus has said, "Let me handle it in My own way"

## 3. Mary speaks to the servants

- a. she recognises that Jesus' words are neither a rebuke nor refusal
- b. she has authority at the wedding, giving the servants orders
- c. the mother who pondered the events and words at His birth, who treasured His sayings when aged twelve at the temple, trusts now in Him that He will do that which is right

## D. The Command . . . . . 2:6-8

- 1. "[6 Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter." And they took it to him.](#)" (John 2:6-8)
  - a. a visitor in the 19th century to Khirbet Qana, about nine miles from Nazareth and thought to be ancient Cana,

saw there discarded water pots, of about 18 to 27 gallons in size

- b. the Greek uses the term "measure" which corresponds to the Jewish word, "bath", yielding about the same size
- c. a good quantity of water for the washing prior to eating would have been needed for the number attending this celebration – these were purification water pots; there was no chance of their having even a vestige of wine in them

## 2. Fill Them and Draw from Them

- a. the commands of Jesus were concise and fully carried out
- b. fill: and they were filled to the brim with water by the servants – there was no room for the addition of anything but water
- c. draw: and a sample was drawn and take to the one responsible for the distribution of food and drink to the guests – the steward

## E. The Miracle . . . . . 2:9-10

1. "9 And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, 10 and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now." (John 2:9-10)

- a. the steward takes of the guests and pronounces it as good
  - (A) the practice of the time seems to have been to serve the better wine at the start of a time of feasting, when the tongue could still discriminated between the good and the bad, and then as the time went on, so substitute an inferior
  - (B) this was a way the bridegroom could cut some costs!
- b. some commentators and some preachers have gone to some lengths the state that this was sweet, non-alcoholic grape juice, but this really flies in the face of all Bible evidence
  - (A) alcohol was never forbidden in the Scriptures, except to those who took the Nazirite vow
  - (B) in fact this was positively enjoined as part of spending of the tithe: "And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household." (Deuteronomy 14:26)
- c. but the Bible also enjoins moderation, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18), and in our society, so given to excess, abstention is the best way for most people

to achieve moderation in this respect

## 2. A Lesson to Be Learned

- a. over the years a number of lessons have been seen in the symbolism of these events
- b. there were 6 water pots, and some have noted that this just falls short of 7, the number of completeness, of perfection
  - (A) something necessary was missing from this wedding
  - (B) and Jesus took that which was imperfect, and satisfied the need
  - (C) in like manner, by filling us with the Living Water, His own self, He uses the Christian to satisfy the hunger of a needy world
- c. the water pots can be thought of as representing the OT ritual
  - (A) they stood outside of the wedding feast, outside of the wedding
  - (B) but upon that base, Jesus provided a new wine for the wedding
  - (C) the Gospel of salvation can be likened to that new wine, where the best has been kept for the last
- d. but there is another lesson, more important which does not depend upon such interpretation and symbolism
  - (A) Mary was willing to relinquish the human relationship that she had had heretofore, that of mother to son
  - (B) to recognize that indeed, this Jesus was Son of God, and had to be about His Father's business
  - (C) in trust to turn it all over to Jesus: do whatever He says
  - (D) "My Jesus doeth all things well", as the hymn says

## F. The Effect . . . . . 2:11-12

1. "11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. 12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days." (John 2:11-12)
  - a. the wedding was a celebration in a small time
  - b. the disciples, newly called from being the Baptist's disciples, were there along with Him and partaking in the celebration
  - c. most of those in the wedding did not even know that there had been a problem; and only a few the miracle that Jesus had performed
  - d. it was also a family time for Jesus, and with His family he returned to Capernaum, another town in Galilee
  - e. so most returned to their home unaware of this miracle – probably that number included his own brothers – the later sons of Joseph and Mary – for we find out afterwards that they did not believe Him

## 2. The Disciples Knew

- a. this was a miracle for the benefit not just of that bridegroom who had mis-estimated how many would attend the wedding, and failed to provide sufficient wine – though he was the beneficiary of some 100 gallons or more of the finest wine; instead of a heavy debt
- b. but it was His own, those new disciples who accompanied Him to Cana that were the greatest beneficiaries
- c. for by this act their faith – like Mary’s – was made firm upon Jesus

## G. Conclusion

1. “30 Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30-31)
2. May our faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, be strengthened by these words today, and from the rest of what John has recorded in this fourth gospel.

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AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769  
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)  
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society  
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Bruce -- *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983  
BM - *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870  
EBC - *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:  
*John*, by Merrill C. Tenney  
Gill - *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.  
LBBC -- *Layman's Bible Book Commentary, Volume 18: John*, by James E. Carter; Broadman Press, Nashville, TE; 1984  
NICNT - *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Gospel according to John*, by Leon Morris  
NTC - *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954  
RWP - *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson  
TEC -- *The Gospel according to John*, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965